

VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

Have We Left Our First Love?

By Ezekiel Bozikis

This is what I've been asking myself lately, and what I feel we all should be asking ourselves. But, what does this question mean?

In Revelation Chapter 2, Jesus Christ sends this message to the Church of Ephesus:

".... I know your works, your labour, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil ... and you have persevered and have patience, and have laboured for My name's sake and have not become weary.

"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love."

Ephesus was a seemingly perfect church. The Ephesians did many charitable works, and they preached the gospel despite persecution; but, they'd left their first love. That is, their love for Jesus.

Like all sincere Christians, there was a point in our lives when we realized (either suddenly or gradually) the truth of the gospel and everything that Christ had done for us. Then we were filled with zeal and love for God and a desire to do good works.

But, like many marriages, after the honeymoon's over the passion disappears and only the formalities remain.

Jesus is our bridegroom and we are His bride. "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." (Song of Solomon 2:4).

Like any husband, He demands first place in our hearts: before ourselves, our families, or the world (Matt. 10:37; John 12:35; I John 2:15). Good works mean nothing to God unless they're done with the right attitude (see Matt. 9:13); perfect love towards God and your neighbour.

But, like the Ephesians, it's possible to get so caught up in the day to day grind of daily living, that we (without even noticing it!) grow cold in our love, and begin simply to do things by rote. I've noticed with myself and many others that outside of the Church, we rarely talk about God - almost as if He's irrelevant to our lives.

Are some people shy or embarrassed? If so, why? Are other people critical of those who "talk religion"? (Now, this attitude is definitely wrong). Or do some people feel that "religion" is personal? Perhaps some aspects of it are, but remember: Christianity is more than just a religion - it's about us *having a relationship with a Person* - Jesus Christ, Our Beloved Bridegroom.

It's about having a loving and passionate relationship, where we can say along with the Shulamite woman:

"I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me Come, my beloved, let us go forth to the field ... there will I give you my love." (Song of Solomon 7:10-12).

COFFEE ROSTER

The coffee offered after liturgy on Saturday nights is appreciated by all who attend and take the opportunity to participate in fellowship. But who helps put it all together and keeps it running every week?

If you would like to help by volunteering for the coffee roster, please contact Nikki Cassimatis. (899 1070)

Retreat 1-3 July 1994

On behalf of my family and myself, we would like to express our warmest gratitude to every individual who made it possible for such a camp to take place.

It's not often that families can attend together...

THANK YOU ALL.

These three days were enjoyable and one can say fruitful. The entire programme had been greatly appreciated And inspiring. Our guest speaker had two interesting topics, one on 'The Sacred Art of the Church' and the second on 'Prison Ministry'.

The surroundings of Bornhoffen were serene and tranquil, the Wintry weather had been forgotten.

The closure of our retreat was highlighted with the Sunday Liturgy which had been conducted by Fr. Sotirios.

A warm Christian bond had been felt which made it special.

With Sincere appreciation,

Helen and Family

(continued from Page 1)

Rather intimate, isn't it? Nevertheless, the Church considers this love-song to be applicable to Christ and the Church.

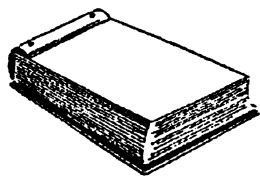
When you're in love (as those of you who've been know) you can't stop thinking about your beloved. You stay awake at night; it hurts every time you're parted; you're always talking about your beloved (so much so, that your friends are tempted to tell you to shut up - sounds familiar, doesn't it?) Of course, I should add that talking about Jesus all the time and not doing the things He's asked of us, doesn't prove that we really love Him either (John 14:15). A balance needs to be found. But, the fact remains, lovers will talk about each other. No power on earth can stop that!.

One last question: Is Jesus asking too much of us?

I think not. After all, we're getting the better part of the deal. He's Prince Charming and we're Cinderella, all covered in ashes. But through His love we are cleansed, that we might be presented to Him without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that we should be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:26,27).

The amazing thing is not that we should be asked to make Jesus the centre and love of our lives, but that He has made each one of us the centre and love of His life! He, the Creator of the Universe, looks down on a speck of dust, and pours all His love on it, in order to lift it up to His level, so that it can experience perfect love, joy and fulfilment. I pray that we don't end up like the Church of Ephesus, but that each one of us seeks to rediscover (or strengthen) our love for Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Thank you for your kind words of encouragement and positive feedback from the last retreat. Our next retreat is on the weekend of 23-25 September. See the enclosed flier for more information.



Days to remember

SEPTEMBER	20 Saint Eustathios
	23 Conception of Forerunner and Baptist John
OCTOBER	6 Apostle Thomas
	16 Holy Fathers of the 7th Ecumenical Council
	17 Apostle and Evangelist Luke
	20 Saint Gerasimos of Cephalonia
	23 Apostle James "Brother-of-God"
	26 Saint Dimitrios
	28 Thanksgiving of Protection of Theotokos.

THE DAPHNI MONASTERY

The **Daphni Monastery** is the most important Byzantine monument in Athens. Its mosaic decorations are among the most significant of their kind in the history of Byzantine painting.

The monastery was originally built on the site of an ancient shrine in the 5th century AD and had a basilica. The fortified enclosure which survives today is well-preserved, particularly the section facing the road.

After a period of long neglect (from the 7th to the 9th century), the monastery was finally rebuilt. A new church was built, together with a number of smaller buildings, including the refectory and the monk's cells. Following the occupation of Athens by the Franks, Otto de la Roche, the duke of Attica, drove the Orthodox monks out of the monastery, giving their place to the Catholic monks of the Cistercian Order. During the Ottoman rule, the expelled Orthodox monks were allowed to return to the monastery.

The church proper, built in the 11th century, is of the octagonal type (hence its exceptionally large dome), and its mosaic decorations are among the best of their kind. The chancel is in the east, and the narthex on the west side of the church. The outer narthex, added a few years after the church was built, is supported by Ionic columns from an ancient temple. The outer narthex also featured a second storey which contained the monastery's library.

However, the unique character of the Daphni monastery lies in its magnificent mosaic decorations. The original decorations covered the interior of the church, depicting scenes from the life of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary. The entire dome is dominated by the figure of Jesus Christ as the Pantocrator, while the apse shows the Virgin Mary surrounded by the Archangels. In the four pendentives are shown scenes from the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Baptism, and the Transfiguration. Around the drum of the dome, as well as in many other parts of the church, the figures of various Christian prophets and saints are shown.



PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE

(Paraphrased by Ezekiel Bozikis from Timothy Ware's **The Orthodox Church**)

In their activity among men the second and third persons of the Trinity are complementary and reciprocal. Christ's work of redemption cannot be considered apart from the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification. The Word took flesh, said St Athanasius, that we might receive the Spirit: from one point of view, the whole "aim" of the Incarnation is the sending of the Spirit at Pentecost.

The Orthodox Church lays great stress upon the work of the Holy Spirit. In every sacramental action of the Church, and most notably at the climax of the Eucharistic Prayer, the Spirit is solemnly invoked. Saint Seraphim of Sarov briefly described the whole purpose of the Christian life as nothing else than the acquisition of the Holy Spirit: ie., deification.

Saint Basil described man as a creature who has received the order to become a god; and Saint Athanasius said that God become man that man might become god. Such, according to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, is the final goal at which every Christian must aim: to become god, to attain theosis, "deification" or "divinization. For Orthodoxy, man's salvation and redemption mean his deification.

The idea of deification must always be understood in the light of the distinction between God's essence and His energies. Union with God means union with the divine energies, not the divine essence: the Orthodox Church, while speaking of deification and union, rejects all forms of pantheism. Man does not become God by nature, but is merely a "created god", a god by grace by status

Deification is something that involves the body. Since man is a unity of body and soul, and since the Incarnate Christ has saved and redeemed the whole man, it follows that "man's body is deified at the same time as his soul".

Even in this present life some saints have experienced the firstfruits of this visible and bodily glorification. Saint Seraphim is the best known, but by no means the only instance of this. When Arsenius the Great was praying, his disciples saw him "just like a fire".

Because Orthodox are convinced that the body is sanctified and transfigured together with the soul, they have an immense reverence for the relics of the saints. We believe that the grace of God present in the saint's bodies during life remains active in their relics when they have died, and that God uses these relics as a channel of divine power and an instrument of healing. In some cases the bodies of saints have been miraculously preserved from corruption, but even where this has not happened, Orthodox show just as great a veneration towards their bones. This reverence for relics is not the fruit of ignorance and superstition, but springs from a highly developed theology of the body.

Not only man's body but the whole of the material creation will eventually be transfigured: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away" (Revelation 21:1). Redeemed man is not to be snatched away from the rest of creation, creation is to be saved and glorified along with him. "The created universe waits with eager expectation for God's sons to be revealed ... for the universe itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and will enter into the liberty and splendour of the children of God".

FNY Friday Night Youth

Greek Orthodox Community of St. George

For some time now OCYF (the Orthodox Christian Youth Fellowship) has been operating every second Friday night from 7:30 - 9:30 pm. What FNY (Friday Night Youth) proposes to do is run on the Friday night that OCYF does not operate. It will meet at the same time, but in an upstairs room at the Welfare Centre. FNY's aim is to compliment OCYF, i.e.

- Where OCYF has a Religious focus, FNY will have a Social / Cultural focus;
- Where OCYF is Youth Leader driven, FNY will be Young People driven;
- Where OCYF runs social activities away from St. George's, FNY will run social activities only at St. George's.

The reason that FNY will only operate at St. George's is that, unlike OCYF, FNY has been allocated a permanent room which the Young People, are setting up as a social meeting place - arranging it in a way that reflects who they are as a group.

FNY's format will include:

- Theme Nights
These will be evenings whose themes have been decided by the Young People. On the night, every one will be encouraged to bring something related to the theme - the aim being to stimulate discussion and social interaction. These nights will form the basis of FNY and will also include supper /tea/coffee...
- Activities Nights
These nights will include: Music/Dance, Cooking, Art, or Poetry. An Activity should happen at least once every three FNY meetings.
- Presentation Nights
Occasional programs will be run on social / cultural issues that Young People and /or Parents may be interested in.
- A Counselling Service (if required)
More will be presented on this aspect of FNY in the up and coming weeks.

In case you are worried about supervision, there will always be at least four youth leaders present at any FNY meeting. Included in these are familiar faces like Helen, Sophroni, and myself Vasili, from OCYF. For those of you who aren't familiar with my background I am trained as a Social Worker and have specialised in providing Youth Services in a Cross Cultural Context. What does this mean? Well, I help young people work on problems they may be facing in their lives, and have specialist skills in making sure the solutions they choose take into account cultural rules that they may or may not be aware of.

FNY will be co-ordinated by myself. The service has Father Gregory's blessing and the Community's support and is in the process of setting up an environment that Young People can identify with and call their own.

The next three meetings of FNY will be on the following days and will include the following events:

- **Friday 30th Sept, 1994**
*More info on FNY,
Art/Poetry /Room Set-Up night.*
- **Friday 14th Oct, 1994**
*Deciding on FNY Rules,
First Theme Night.*
- **Friday 28th Oct, 1994**
Official opening of FNY

If Young People are unable to attend for the full two hours every fortnight, they are most welcome to attend for just a portion of the evening - i.e. to meet with friends and have some tea/coffee or supper.

If you have any questions about the FNY format or its content please call me on (07) 844 5834.

Regards,



Vasili Theodorakis B.Soc.Wk.



O.C.Y.F.

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

WHAT IS IT ?

An Orthodox Christian Youth Fellowship for young people over the age of 13.

WHAT DOES IT OFFER ?

A place where young people can come together to:

- *Discuss Orthodox Christian principles.*
- *Examine contemporary moral issues.*
- *Enjoy social, cultural, and sporting activities.*

HOW OFTEN DOES IT MEET ?

Every second Friday....23rd Sept, 7th Oct, 21st Oct, 4th Nov etc.,

WHERE ?

Greek Orthodox Church of St. George....Respite Centre, corner of Besant and Browning Streets, South Brisbane.

TIME ?7:30 - 9:30 pm

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT THE CO-ORDINATOR:Ms Helen Demitriou
PHONE: 849 3012(H) or 841 4444(W)**

CHILDREN'S BOOKS & ACTIVITIES

A SPECIAL GIFT TO GOD

I. Theodore

A delightful children's book tells the story of a young boy's gift to God in the form of a prosforo for the Divine Liturgy. Excellent color illustrations and an imaginative text make this a lovely gift for children. **On Order**

GOD IS WITH US — BIBLE STORIES FOR CHILDREN

S. Koulomzin

This Orthodox book of Bible stories from the Old and New Testaments is illustrated in iconographic style. Stories include Creation, Noah, Moses, and the life and ministry of Jesus. Excellent for home and church use. **On Order**

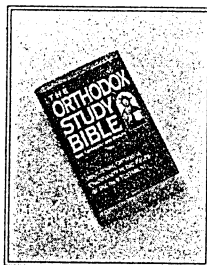
COLORING BOOKS

While they color, children learn about the ministry of Christ. The simple text is easy to read and the large drawings are easy to color. Ideal for children ages 5 to 7. **\$3.00**

BIBLES

ORTHODOX STUDY BIBLE

Includes the New Testament and Psalms from an Orthodox perspective. Introductions and outlines to the books of the Bible, a concordance and glossary, special articles on Orthodox doctrine, scripture readings for Feast Days, full color icons, morning and evening prayers, special articles such as "How To Read The Bible" and "What Is The Orthodox Christian Church" by Bishop Kallistos Ware. **\$ 30.00**



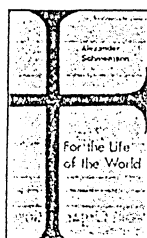
Metropolitan Anthony (who is known to many readers as Anthony Bloom) is a Russian Orthodox bishop. Before becoming a monk he was a physician who worked with the French Resistance during World War Two. His writings have attracted an ever-growing audience in this country and in England, where he is also noted for his radio and television appearances. During the years since its initial appearance, *LIVING PRAYER* has become a spiritual classic. Among the many topics covered here are the problem of praying honestly, meditation and worship, and how to discard false images of ourselves and of God. In *LIVING PRAYER* Metropolitan Anthony tells us, as few writers can, how to begin and sustain the life of prayer.

living prayer

\$12

For the Life of the World Sacraments and Orthodoxy

Alexander Schmemmann



An approach to the world and to man's life in it that stems from the liturgical experience of the Church. Fr. Schmemmann strikingly deals with the issues of "secularism" and Christian culture, viewing them from the perspective of the unbroken experience of the Church, as revealed and communicated in her worship, in her liturgy.

"... a powerful, articulate, and indeed, creative essay in sacramental theology..." *Thomas Merton*

151 pp.

\$ 10.50



TOPICAL BOOKLETS

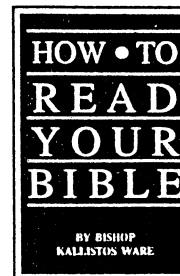


Published by Concordia Press

PRACTICAL PRAYER

By Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

Discusses many aspects of prayer—personal and corporate, liturgical and spontaneous, and the practice of the Jesus Prayer. Very warm and personal, from an interview with this noted author.

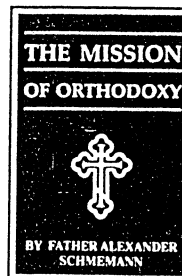


Published by Concordia Press

HOW TO READ YOUR BIBLE

By Bishop Kallistos Ware

Have you been longing for a better working knowledge of the Scriptures and a more intimate familiarity with their Divine Author? Sets forth the basics of personal Bible study from a truly Orthodox perspective.



Published by Concordia Press

THE MISSION OF ORTHODOXY

By Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

This powerful message calls for a "new form of monasticism without celibacy and without the desert." Provides a vision for the future of Orthodoxy in North America, and a crystal clear agenda for reaching its goals.

Theology of the Icon
vol. 1 & 2

Leonid Ouspensky

trans. by Anthony Gythiel

This is the most comprehensive introduction available to the history and theology of the icon, and is the standard text upon which most modern studies of iconography are based. It surveys the development of the sacred art of the Christian East from its beginnings in catacomb art through the iconoclastic controversies of the eighth and ninth centuries. It includes an analysis of the flowering and development of early Russian iconography, tracing its later influences and the state of the art today. Fifty-one black-and-white photo illustrations, with four-panel fold-out and six color plates.

Leonid Ouspensky was one of the most influential iconographers and iconologists of this century.

\$ 34



All books available from St George's
Orthodox Church South Brisbane or
Contact Anthony & Nicki Cassimatis on
(07) 8991070.

Hymn of Entry

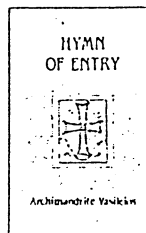
Archimandrite Vasileios of Iviron

Liturgy and Life in the Orthodox Church
Fr. Vasileios states: "Theology does not have a philosophy of its own, nor spirituality a mentality of its own, nor church administration a system of its own, nor hagiography its own artistic school. All these emerge from the same font of liturgical experience. They all function together in a trinitarian way, singing the thrice-holy hymn in their own languages."

Archimandrite Vasileios is Abbot of Iviron Monastery, Mount Athos, and has been a major figure in the modern revival of monasticism on the Holy Mountain.

144 pp.

\$10.50



"Giver of Comfort"

If the icon spoke a different language, it would torment man. If it relied on historical accuracy, it would merely be saying to us: You did not have the luck to be there then and see these events as those who crucified the Lord saw them.

If the icon depicted Christ suffering pain on the Cross like a condemned man and rejoicing at the Resurrection, it would leave us prey to the vicissitudes that lead to death, in the thrall of our passions. It would not give us anything beyond what we already had ourselves.

If the icon depicted night and day in romantic shades, it would leave us in the prison of the created world which we have come to know so well since the fall. If it feared the night, if it could be obscured by natural darkness, then we should be in the position of the unbaptized; we should fear death, and death would cut short our hope in life. We should remain in the territory of death.

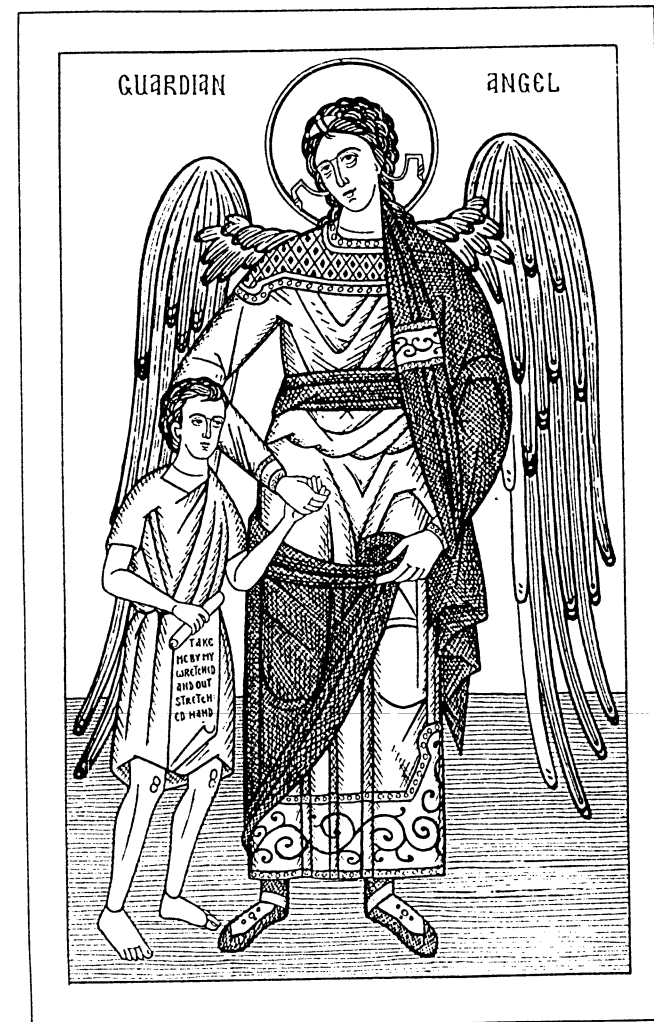
If the icon used perspective, it would put us, in a harsh if polite manner, outside Paradise and outside immediate participation in its world, like the foolish virgins; instead of our being partakers in the Wedding, it would throw us out into the darkness and cold of objective vision, into deception.

In other words, if the icon remained on the level of a religious picture, when it spoke to us of the fact of salvation it would merely be offering us an artistic diversion to make us forget, if possible, the prison and the territory of death. It would be a mockery.

As it is, it is a Deliverance. The icon is not a representation of events. It is not an idol that has been manufactured; it is Grace incarnate, a presence and an offering of life and holiness.

Orthodox iconography is a witness to the victory over death won by the Author of life and His friends. The laws of iconography are the laws of spiritual life; its power, the power of the Resurrection. And one enters the world of the icon and learns its language through repentance and humble veneration, not through observation and mere artistic training. The colors speak silently and the forms reveal what is without form to those "who venerate the mystery in faith."

from "Hymn of
Entry" p. 88-89.



BOOKS
FOR
ORTHODOX
CHRISTIANS

Issue One 9/94



SAINT KYRIAKI

SAINT KYRIAKI

(Her memory is celebrated 7 July)

Around the 3rd century AD, during the reign of the two Emperors, Doklitanos and Maximianos, of the Roman Empire, lived a couple who were devoted Christians. Even though they were reasonably wealthy, they shared this wealth with the poor by extending their hospitality and by providing food and clothing. They were a childless couple but with their faith in God their prayers were answered - the woman gave birth to a baby girl. Sunday (Kyriaki) was the day the baby was born and this is what they named her when she was baptised.

The love and affection for their daughter was supported by the endeavour to make her into a good Christian, and as the years passed she became all the more exceptional. Her wisdom, purity and other virtues attracted the interest of many noblemen in the area. They looked upon her as a suitable choice for a wife. Even her parents started to seriously think about her marriage, but Kyriaki listened with disinterest. Her thoughts were with the martyrs who daily shed their blood for Christ.

Kyriaki's beauty, however, caught the attention of one particular pagan nobleman and without knowing that she was a Christian, he decided to ask her hand in marriage. His father approached Kyriaki's parents expressing his son's wishes and his approval for this union to take place. Kyriaki wouldn't hear of such a thing. She had decided to devote herself body and soul to Christ. The nobleman's father was angered by her refusal, but knowing of his son's desire for this woman he had to be cautious. He didn't want this desire to compel his son into becoming a Christian. With this in mind he went to the Governor and accused Kyriaki and her parents of being Christians.

Before the governor, Kyriaki's parents remained firm in their faith. Not even the threats of torture, if they didn't renounce their faith, weakened their resolve. Furious the Governor didn't know how to react by the Christians' brave stance, so he ordered Kyriaki to appear before the Emperor Doklitanos. This proved useless as well. Finally, unsuccessful in convincing her to renounce Christ using diplomacy and treats, he sent her to the Emperor Maximianos who, overtaken by her beauty, was determined to achieve what the others had failed. He begged her to offer a sacrifice to the idols but she refused adamantly.

In the meantime, Kyriaki's parents were already subjected to horrific tortures. She was also bought before them to witness their painful ordeal, but when Kyriaki saw her parents dying with Christ's name on their lips she took greater courage in her decision to remain a bride of the Lord.

Her torture begins. They laid her on the ground, legs and arms outstretched, and started whipping her with rage, but she endured the pain with her fervent belief and the power of prayer. The days passed and Maximianos wasn't getting the results he wanted. He then decided to send her to the Governor of Bithinia, Ilarionos, who had the reputation of being brutal and of having forced some Christians into renouncing their faith. Giving the order to hang her by the hair they started burning parts of her body with flaming torches, but Kyriaki did not succumb to his demands. At Ilarionos suggestion that it was the pagan gods who were helping her endure the torture, Kyriaki told him to take her to the pagan temple if he wished to test the power of his gods. Once inside the temple her faith and love for Christ intensified, and kneeling she prayed passionately to God to destroy the idols and show His power. An earthquake shook the temple and the idols fell, shattering on the ground. Those present ran to save themselves, but Ilarionos was crushed to death by the falling statues. No one dared to capture her. Free now, Kyriaki preached amongst the shaken multitude and many believed in Christ.

After the tragic death of Ilarionos, he was replaced by Apollonias who re-captured Kyriaki and continued to subject her to torture. Realising, however, that all attempts to force her to renounce Christ were futile, she was led away to be beheaded. Obtaining permission to pray, she knelt with tears of joy in her eyes because she had been able to withstand the pain and temptation - she now had the honour to give up her life for her faith without having yielded. While Saint Kyriaki prayed, angels of God took her soul, lifting her triumphantly and glorified into heaven - in the kingdom of God. The execution party, seeing that she was no longer alive, realised something extraordinary had happened and fearfully retreated.

A small group of Christians, with respect and emotion and with reinforced faith, took her sacred body and buried it with praise and prayer in the name of God.



- by Christina Dedoussis

Retreat Tambourine ...
... a chance to reflect...
... for ORTHODOX

➔ 23 ~ 25 SEPTEMBER
1994

Guest Speaker:

Mr Ray Haddad is a graduate of St Andrew's Theological College. He is currently employed as a prison counsellor for Orthodox in New South Wales.

Participants will share in Ray's experience through talks and discussion as he broaches important social issues.

ALL AGE GROUPS WELCOME...

Venue: Camp Tambourine

- Cabin Accommodation
(map available closer to departure date)

Cost: • Family \$80 †
(inc. parents & children
under 12)

• Individual \$40 †

• Day Guests \$10

These costs include all
meals and accommodation
for one or more nights†.
You will need to pack
personal belongings and
a sleeping bag / blankets
and pillow.

Bookings: English Liturgy
Bookshop or phone
Anthony Cassimatis
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ORGANIZED BY ENGLISH LITURGY COMMITTEE - St George